

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOSH ZEPNICK
WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

The recent column by Craig Shirley and Laura Ingraham trumpeting the relevance and legacy of Reagan goes out of its way to rewrite history and make outrageous claims with zero evidence to support their argument.

In a bizarre twist, the writers not only decry Democrats including FDR, but pair us up with “big government Republicans like Bush” and insist that individualism is not only superior to everything else, it is under threat by the state, i.e. government abuse.

They make some wild points so let’s take a look at actual history vs. the revisionist nostalgia about Reagan. First, the size of the Federal government actually grew under Reagan and with his approval. That came in the form of: much larger defense spending, greater and wider benefits under Social Security, and it was financed largely by increasing the Federal debt.

The cuts to “welfare” were actually transfers of public dollars away from government agencies to for-profit service providers, under the Reagan banner that the private sector does it all perfect and government is simply incompetent. Yet, even here in Wisconsin we saw millions of taxpayer dollars go to waste under the W-2 program, to pay staff bonuses, lavish trips, hiring family friends, etc.

And, I guess when BP spills oil, drug manufacturers lie or buy off research studies, mortgage companies sell defective products that land the middle class into bankruptcy, or when Wall Street breaks laws that sink the rest of the nation’s retirement, well that’s not incompetent?

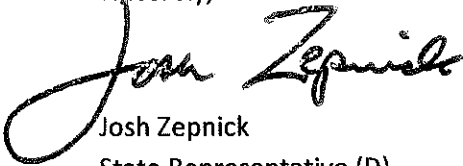
Compared to such “overbearing government” like pulling the majority of older Americans who were not born wealthy or lucky to have big savings accounts out of poverty with Social Security, or making sure all kids have access to health insurance and doctors visits, funding public schools so that everyone has a chance at the American Dream, or regulating industries that pollute, lend money, or impact public safety, the state must be doing something wrong.

Hogwash. Individualism, especially in a digital and wireless era, has if anything gone so far overboard, that people increasingly feel disconnected from each other, crime and degrading behavior is found from central city to suburb to rural small town: drug addiction, sexualized violence (increasingly with younger and younger boys and girls), depression and PTSD, random gun shootings, cyberstalking, texting while driving, etc.

FDR's New Deal, which the writers trash, not only helped our elders through Social Security, but led to regulatory reforms to protect our food, life savings, and natural resources. It brought electricity, national parks, roads and bridges and public schools to millions of ordinary Americans and built by rugged individuals, who took their CCC or WPA compensation and sent portions back home so their families could put food on the table. Not to mention, FDR finishing off WWII seems to me to trump the multiple Reagan failures in the Mideast and Central America. And that Soviet Union thing? Guess who is back in action...it's why your gas prices are going down. America and Saudi Arabia are driving down oil commodities to essentially undermine Putin and his attempt to put together the USSR.

Reagan preached that government was your enemy, while folks with big money were able to get their way everytime even if it means breaking the law. FDR, born wealthy but humbled by an adult disability, knew that even the strong can get weak and that the weak are as worthy of saving and succeeding as anyone else God put on the planet. I'll take the latter any day of the week and remind us all that any individual liberty is only as strong as the common lot we all share in life as citizens in a democracy, the two need each other and the two are not mutually exclusive. RIP Mr. Reagan along with your wrongful politics and damage to the republic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Zepnick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" and last name "Zepnick" clearly legible.

Josh Zepnick

State Representative (D)

Wisconsin 9th Assembly District